

LEADR on dealing with customers' difficult behaviours

by Fiona Hollier

The International Customer Service Professionals (ICSP) brings together its members at breakfast meetings and training sessions to learn better ways of dealing with customers.

ICSP invited LEADR to present at its breakfast meetings during May on *Dealing with Customers' Difficult Behaviours*.

The team of presenters collaborated to prepare some punchy and useful information for the 40 minute timeslot. Building on the agreed core messages and using the LEADR branded slide show, each presenter brought their own particular style and experiences into the room.

Jodi Mansfield in Brisbane role-played two difficult customers engaging the audience in how best to deal with these individuals.

Fiona Hollier in Sydney walked amongst the group to invite attendees to share relevant anecdotes.

Nicole Cullen, speaking to a very large group of more than 90 people in Melbourne, engaged attendees in a listening activity.

Franca Petrone in Adelaide grounded the material in examples which encouraged attendee participation.

Unfortunately, Perth did not go ahead, so **Margaret Halsmith** was spared the early morning trip to the city!

The presentation built on the LEADR approach articulated as follows:

- Treat people with respect
- See their behaviours as difficult for us and perhaps for others
- Respond to these difficult behaviours constructively
- Build the relationship – identify the issue, separate from the person Aim to engage the person in problem solving as a partner
- Understand the issue(s), the needs and concerns well
- Explore a range of options
- Settle on a solution that meets all the main needs and resolves the issue

To stimulate attendees to think, we presented two sound bites.

Recognising that customer service professionals often only have a few minutes to resolve a customer's concerns, the presenters elaborated on three fundamental steps:

- **R**espond to the emotions
- **E**xplore the issues
- **M**ove to solutions

Thanks to all the presenters for promoting the skills of effective dispute resolution, for their time and effort and for their generous contribution both to LEADR and to ICSP.